



Calgary and Area Pathway and Bikeway Implementation Plan

What We Did
December 10, 2019

The Calgary and Area Pathway and Bikeway Implementation Plan

In 2000, Council approved the original Calgary Pathway and Bikeway Plan. It included a comprehensive set of guiding principles related to the planning, design and management of Calgary’s pathway and bikeway network. It also included an implementation map, which showed existing and proposed pathways, bikeways and bridges.

Since then, new communities, pathways and bikeways were built, and new policies and guidelines have been approved. Despite these changes, the Calgary Pathway and Bikeway Plan remained the same.

When the Cycling Strategy was approved in 2011, it was identified that the Calgary Pathway and Bikeway Plan needed to be updated. In 2017, we began the process of updating the original plan. The updated plan includes the Always Available for All Ages and Abilities (5A) Network guiding principles and draft map.

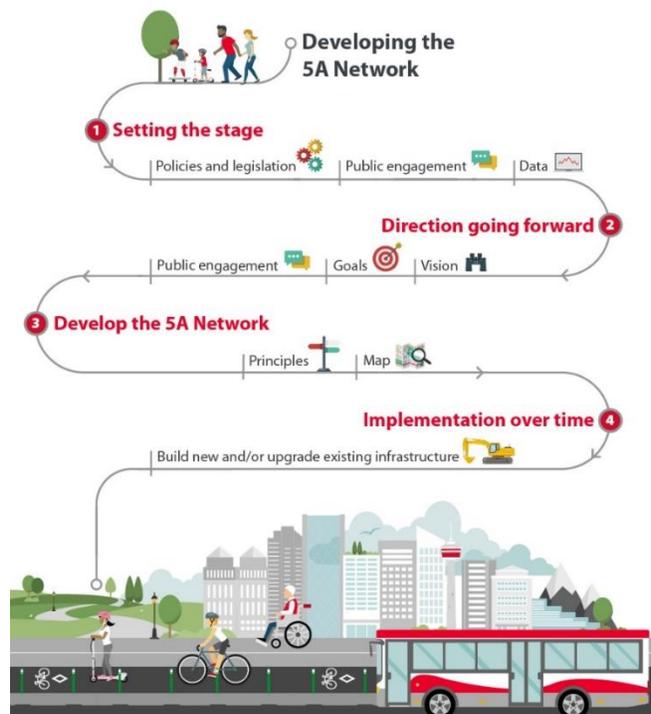
How we updated the plan

Updating the plan was a complex process. Technical work, a policy review and engagement with Calgarians contributed to the development of the updated network principles and draft map.

The technical work began with digitizing the original implementation map. This helped us identify what pathways and bikeways were already built, which ones were obsolete and which ones are still recommended routes.

We then analyzed various pieces of data. This included usage data for our existing pathways and bikeways, demographic information about Calgarians, information about our existing road network and feedback from public engagement.

The first phase of engagement helped us lay the groundwork for developing the updated 5A Network principles and map. It also helped us identify what routes are needed to connect Calgarians to the destinations they want to visit.



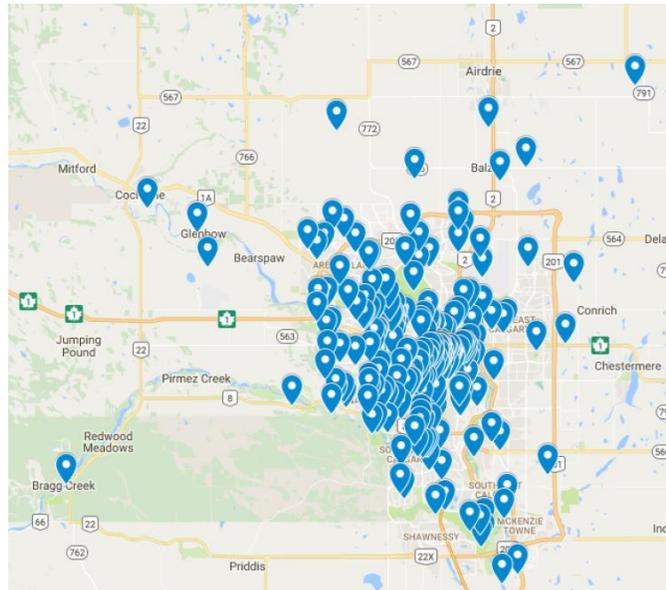


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During the first phase of engagement we asked Calgarians about how they use our existing pathway and bikeway network, the challenges and difficulties they experience with our existing pathway and bikeway network, and destinations they like to visit using the existing network. A summary of feedback received in Phase 1 can be found below, detailed feedback is within the Phase 1 [What We Heard Report](#).

To help us identify challenges and difficulties with the existing network, Calgarians pinned locations on a digital map. We used that data to create a map of hot spots with potential issues to address.



The comments associated with the pinned locations helped us better understand the issues that people were experiencing when using our network. These issues were grouped into the following themes: comfort, connectivity, safety and directness of route.

Participants also used a digital map to pin the common destinations they use the existing network to travel to. Many people identified their home, place of work, schools, parks and recreation facilities as the places they travel to most often. This information was used to help us identify the origin and destination of trips using our pathway and bikeway network. As this information was digitized, we overlaid it on our existing network to determine where to recommend new infrastructure to connect destinations that people are traveling to.

For the development of the 5A Network principles, we used feedback from people who participated in both phases of engagement. People told us how they use our existing network, how accessible it is from their starting destination, what weather conditions they are likely to use it in and how they would prioritize building out the network. This information helped us determine what principles will improve comfort, connectivity and safety when upgrading existing or building new pathways and bikeways.

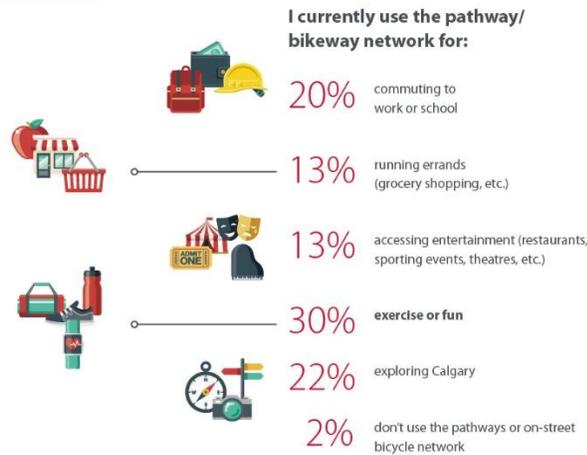


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What Calgarians told us about how they use the existing network.

During Phase 1 of engagement Calgarians were asked about how they use the pathway and bikeway network. This is a summary of what we heard.



How often do you use the pathway/bikeway network?



Is the pathway network and/or bikeway network easily accessible from where you start your trip?



If you are using the pathway and bikeway network to get to a destination, how many minutes are you willing to travel in ideal weather conditions?



If you are using the pathway and bikeway network to get to a destination, how many minutes are you willing to travel in adverse weather conditions (cold/wet)?





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Prioritizing building out the network

During the second phase of the project, technical experts developed an updated network map, using data and public feedback gathered during the first phase. New routes were proposed in all quadrants of the city, including new connections over or under major roads and waterways.

The build-out of routes will be prioritized over more than 10 years. To ensure that routes are prioritized in a way that Calgarians support, we asked for assistance with this task during the [second phase of engagement](#). We provided Calgarians with four criteria to choose from. They prioritized the build-out of pathways and bikeways as follows:

- Routes where there are safety concerns and have been collisions in the past
- Where we'll get the most people walking and biking
- Social equity (improve areas where people are less likely to own or operate their own vehicle)
- Spread evenly around the city



Once all the proposed routes are finalized, they will be weighted using these criteria, along with technical requirements. This will help us determine which proposed pathways and bikeways will be built first.

The Always Available for All Ages and Abilities (5A) Network

During the first phase of engagement, we heard that the barriers experienced by people using our existing pathway and bikeway network are: comfort, connectivity, safety and directness of the route. They also indicated that direct connections, pathways and safer on-street connections will encourage them to use the network more. This feedback, provided using online maps and text responses, and research from previous cycling projects confirmed the need for an Always Available for All Ages and Abilities (5A) Network in Calgary.

The 5A Network will help Calgarians get to the destinations they want to visit within their communities and across the city, whether they are walking or wheeling. People of all ages and physical abilities will be able to use the network, at all hours of the day in varying weather conditions. This will be done through upgrading existing and building new pathways and bikeways that align with the 5A Network principles.



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The 5A Network principles are:

- Separate people by their speed
- Improve visibility
- Make it reliable
- Be accessible for everyone
- Make it easy to use

During the second phase of engagement, participants told us what types of pathways and bikeways they are most likely to use. When walking, participants indicated they would be more likely to walk on a separated pathway with separate spaces for walking and biking, rather than a multi-use pathway. When biking, participants indicated they would be most likely to ride a bike on a pathway with separate spaces for walking and biking, along with separated on-street bike lanes. Understanding that having designated spaces for people walking and cycling is important, the 5A Network will have more facilities that are separated from traffic, and fewer places where people walking and wheeling mix with traffic. Examples of these facilities are shared below.

More facilities separated from traffic		Fewer places where people walking and wheeling mix with traffic
 Bike paths	 Multi-use pathways	 Painted bike lanes
 Protected bike lanes	 Twinned pathways	 Shared use lanes
 Bike boulevards / Neighbourhood greenways Slower speeds and lower vehicle volumes	 Shared spaces	 Signed routes

Please refer to the draft Alberta Bicycle Design Guide for detailed descriptions of each facility type.



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To build the 5A Network, we will need to retrofit existing pathways and bikeways, as well as build new infrastructure. If the 5A Network is approved, existing pathways and bikeways will be retrofitted when they are life-cycled and new infrastructure will be built as funding comes available. It will take multiple years to retrofit and build the 5A Network.

Community connections and active living

Enabling Calgarians to live active and healthy lifestyles is important to The City. Investments in active transportation infrastructure, which includes our pathways and bikeways, provides Calgarians with active ways to travel through and around our city and helps reduce and prevent social isolation.

During the first phase of engagement Calgarians were asked to pin the common destinations that they travel to regularly using our existing network. This information helped us identify what types of places people are travelling to, so that our technical experts could plan new pathways and/or bikeways to these locations across the city. The destinations that people told us they travel to most often are destinations within their community, such as workplaces, schools, shopping centres and recreation sites like regional parks.

As well, Calgarians told us about the various challenges and barriers they face while using our existing pathways and bikeways. They identified issues like off-set gates and posts that block the entrances to pathways, poor directional signage, poor maintenance and missing connections to name a few. For a full summary of challenges and barriers faced by users please see the [What We Heard Report](#) from the first phase of engagement.

To improve community connections, promote active living and make pathways and bikeways more accessible for everyone, the 5A Network principles support:

- removing barriers like off-set gates where appropriate,
- smoother surface materials,
- fewer routes on steep hills,
- separating people according to their speed where appropriate,
- improving visibility through lighting and pavement markings,
- providing a reliable experience through additional year-round maintenance, and
- improving connections to transit.

What's next

The project team is working on finalizing the updated 5A Network map. This map will show all the proposed pathways and bikeways to improve how Calgarians travel to the destinations they want to visit. It is anticipated that it will be finalized in 2020.

The 5A Network principles will be presented to Calgary City Council in Q4 2019 for review and approval.